

Vermont State Board of Education Monthly Report – November 2008

Armando Vilaseca Named Vermont

Commissioner of Education – Armando

Vilaseca was named Vermont's new commissioner of education by the State Board of Education on November 20th and will begin his tenure on January 19th.

"Armando's experience, energy and passion for education will serve Vermonters well," Governor James Douglas said. "He shares my commitment to ensuring that every child has access to the knowledge and training they need to succeed in the 21st Century, contribute to economic growth and inspire innovation. I look forward to working with him."

"Armando brings to the position a tremendous amount of field experience," said State Board Chair Tom James. "He has a reputation for being innovative and exhibits a willingness to take reasonable risk to improve and enhance education for all students. He exhibits confidence and trust in people, and lets leaders lead. The Board is pleased to have had a significant number of very strong applications, and feels we have the right person for these times."

A resident of Westford, Vermont, Vilaseca graduated from the University of Vermont with a bachelor of science degree in education. He received his masters in education with a focus on educational leadership from Lesley College in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Vilaseca has over 29 years of experience in Vermont education, having spent his entire professional career in Vermont schools. He began as a classroom teacher at the Georgia Middle School in Georgia, Vermont, and served as a teaching principal at the Reading Elementary School. He then served as the principal for Westford Elementary and Middle School, assistant principal and then principal of Essex High School, a position he served in for 10 years, and superintendent of the Colchester School District. Most recently he has served as the superintendent of Franklin West Supervisory Union.

Vilaseca, a native of Cuba, has also served as a government liaison accompanying a delegation to Cuba to introduce Cubans to Vermont agricultural products.

As the commissioner of education, he will oversee the Department of Education staff of 190 individuals in carrying out the duties of coordinating the educational work of the public schools in Vermont.

Bill Talbott has been acting commissioner since June 2008 and will remain on board as CFO of the department.

Board establishes an Education

Transformation Policy Commission –

Deputy Commissioner for Transformation Bill Romond described the education transformation policy commission being recommended to the board for the purpose of a comprehensive review of existing policies and rules in order to systemically drive the Transformation process. Combined with a conscious effort to support waiver requests intended to eliminate barriers, policy is one of the major tools available to the board to advance the Transformation initiative. Following is the goal of the Commission:

Recommend a policy framework for advancing education transformation to the State Board of Education that

- Reflects analysis of the broad spectrum of policy issues impacting education practices and education quality and is based on research
- Emphasizes high leverage policy areas that could stimulate the greatest advances for systemic change with the fewest mandates
- Balances support and pressure for school action toward transformation
- Includes specific language for legislation and/or administrative rules

Commission members will be appointed according to the following criteria:

- Members are appointed by the State Board
- Does not exceed 12-15 members

- Priority membership to practitioners with focus on student-centered interests
- Sunsets on December 31, 2009

Membership from the following groups:

- State Board of Education (2)
- Superintendents (2)
- Principals (2)
- Teachers (2)
- Parents, business, and community (3)
- Higher Education (2)
- House and Senate Education committees (2)

In addition, a variety of education stakeholders could provide input to commission, but would not be members.

For more information, contact Bill Romond (Bill.Romond@state.vt.us); or Kay Charron (Kay.Charron@state.vt.us).

For additional information on the Transformation initiative, see <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/transformation.html>.

Acting Commissioner's Update:

Acting Commissioner Bill Talbott reported that his most recent activities have focused on the FY 2009 budget reductions and the development of the FY 2010 budget.

From the Department

School Construction Resources – In the absence of State School Construction Aid, USDA Rural Development Funds are becoming more and more important as a source of funding for school facility projects in Vermont. The U.S. Department on Energy presents the *Guide to Financing Energy Smart Schools* to provide schools districts with information on building and financing High Performance Schools. Information for both can be found on the “resources” section of the school construction page at: http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_construction.html#resources
Contact: Cathy Hilgendorf ((802) 828-5402 or cathy.hilgendorf@state.vt.us)

FY2008 Special Education Cost, ADM and Child Count by School District – The FY 2008 spreadsheet is used to determine high and low spending districts in accordance with 16 V.S.A. §2974. High spending is defined as spending at least 20 percent more than the statewide average

of special education (formula) eligible costs per average daily membership. High spending districts have until December 1, 2008 to submit a request for waiver of the provisions of the high spending statute or until March 31, 2009 if no waiver is granted. View the spreadsheet at http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_finance_sped.html#high_low. Contact: Doug Dows (802) 828-5109 or doug.dows@state.vt.us for additional information.

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For additional information on Department of Education sponsored events for December and January, visit

<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/calendar.html>. The calendar is updated regularly.

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For more information on the Vermont State Board of Education, visit: <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/mainboard.html>.

To view approved minutes of SBE meetings:

<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#approved>

To view State Board of Education's Monthly Reports:

http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#monthly_reports

2008-2009 State Board of Education Meeting

Dates: August 25-26; September 16; October 21; November 18; December 16; January 20; February 17; March 17; April 14; May 19; June 16

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